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# ...Christmas Voices...

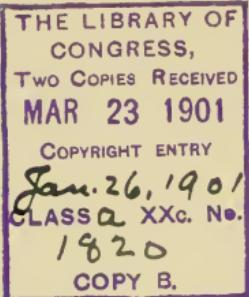
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AND

OTHER POEMS.

F. H. DAVIS.

1901.



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PRESS OF THE ERIE REVIEW  
ERIE, COLORADO.

My First  
Volume of Poems  
I Dedicate  
To My  
First Sweetheart,  
Now  
My Wife.

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### Preface.

A PREFACE to a volume of poems is an unnecessary evil, but one which long custom has made imperative. I have very little excuse to offer for this volume. It is; and that is all. In collecting my various efforts into a volume I have met with many that I have consigned to the tender mercies of the waste basket—perhaps some so consigned are better than any honored with a place in these pages. I have omitted many that, in my judgment, were not worthy of a place, and have admitted many that, had it been left to me alone, would not have been included. But as they are, so are they; and, for better or for worse, the deed is done.

This edition is limited and it is not my expectation that it will circulate far beyond the confines of my personal acquaintances.

Most of the poems included in this collection have previously appeared in papers with which I have been connected during my fifteen years of newspaper work. They were not written with any idea of permanency—often only to fill space. Some of the best things I have written have disappeared from sight and cannot now be recalled. Many of my poems have been of a humorous trend and such I have intentionally omitted, as in my opinion so-called humorous poetry is not true poetry and has no place with it.

In putting this work on the press I wish to thank Rev. J. A. Mustard for his kindness in revising my proofs, and also the many friends whose subscriptions enabled me to confidently undertake the work.

F. H. DAVIS.

## On the Continent's Crest.

For us the sun gives up his heat and light;

For us the moon shines from the ethereal blue:

For us the wild-bird sings from dizzy height;

For us the fragrant flowers, of brilliant hue.

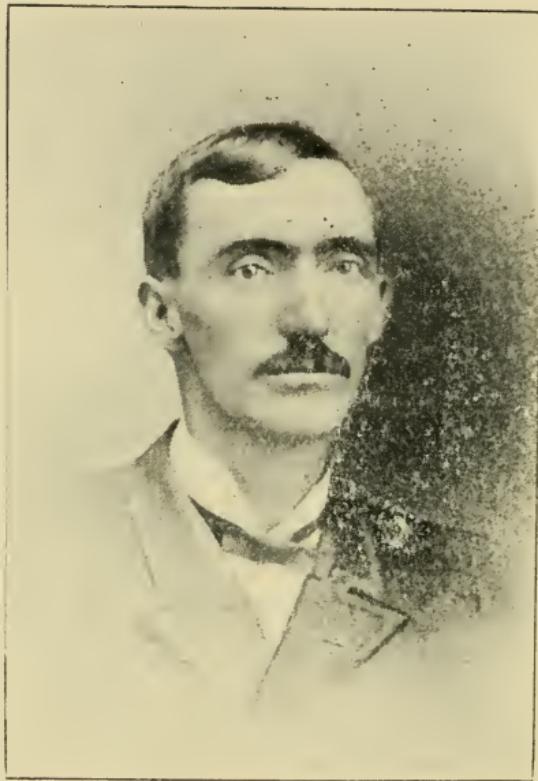
Within us stirs the Spirit born of Song,

And whispers thoughts that will not be repressed;

And as we walk life's busy way along,

We pause to sing upon the New World's crest.





F.N. Davis.







# Christmas Voices.

*Christmas Greeting.*

My thoughts this morning turn to thee,  
And so this greeting I will send;  
For though thou art afar from me,  
'Tis sweet to know and call thee friend.

**Christmas Morning.**

A glow on the peaks  
Where a snow-mantle lies,  
A blush on the cheeks  
Of the morning-lit skies —

Gray shadows that creep  
Through the valley below  
Where Night still would sleep,  
Unwilling to go.

Then a roseate gleam  
On the face of the sky,  
Then a glorious stream  
Of light mounting on high —

Then the great golden sun  
Gives completeness to day,  
And, her dark watches done,  
Night hastens away.

*Christmas Hymn.*

Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!  
Let the glad hosannas rise,  
Till the lowly earth-born chorus  
Meets the chorus of the skies.

Let the prairies catch the echoes,  
Let the snow-clad peaks rejoice,  
Let the valleys swell the chorus  
And the rivers find a voice.

As the morning stars together  
Sang this morning, long ago,  
Let the inanimate things of nature  
Join the angelic chorus now.

Till the grand triumphant anthem,  
Swelling upward and afar,  
Shall proclaim to all the nations:  
“We have seen the Eastern Star.

“We have read aright the message  
That the hosts angelic bring,  
And in joyous exultation  
Sing we praises to our King.”



Gently fall, O kindly Thought.

Winds of winter, Gently blow,  
Gently fall, O fleecy snow.

Softly fall,  
And cover over,  
Deeply cover—  
Cover all.

Gently fall, O kindly thought;  
With a heavenly message fraught,  
Fall ere long,  
And cover over,  
Deeply cover,  
All that's wrong.

Ancient quarrels hide from sight  
Cover as with robe of white—  
And for aye,  
As though with snow  
They're hid, and lo!  
They pass away.

### The First Christmas.

You have heard the old, old story  
Of the bright and radiant glory  
That resplendent o'er Judea shed its soft and won-  
drous light;

When all the world was sleeping,  
Save the shepherds, who were keeping  
Lonely watch, their flocks protecting from the dan-  
gers of the night.

How that radiant light broke o'er them,  
And God's Angel stood before them,  
Saying: "Fear not; joyful tidings unto Earth to-  
night, I bring—

Tidings of a tiny stranger,  
Cradled in a lowly manger,  
Who is Christ, the Holy Savior, Son of God, your  
promised King.

And a host of Angels straightway,  
Pouring out from Heaven's gateway,  
Joined their voices in a chorus of exultation then.  
Heaven's harmonies were blended  
In the sweet strains that descended:  
“UNTO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, GLORY; ON EARTH, PEACE,  
GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN.”

Now, while Christmas bells are ringing,  
All the Universe is singing,  
Angel voices swell the chorus ringing through the  
Earth below;  
Thankful for the gift of Heaven,  
That to needy Earth was given—  
God's best gift unto his children, on that Christmas  
long ago.



**A Christmas Story.**

“Why?” That’s a woman’s question;  
To your first I’ve answered no;  
Your second I’ll leave unanswered,  
Twere better to leave it so.

You love me, I can not doubt it;  
You are noble and kind and true;  
But a dead hand reaches from out the past  
And holds me away from you.

You are angry now and will carry  
Your bitter thoughts away.  
Well, better than lose your friendship,  
I’ll ask you a while to stay,

Till I tell you why I refuse you.  
Perhaps ’twere best you know—  
That I speak of a sorrow that changed my life—  
A sorrow of long ago.

And so I will tell the story,  
Though tears still dim my eyes  
When phantoms from the misty past  
At Fancy's call arise.

Picture, if you can, a canon,  
A canon dark and deep,  
With walls of gloomy granite,  
Abrupt and high and steep—

In the canon a little hamlet,  
A score of homes or so,  
With their gables scarce projecting  
Above the drifts of snow—

And I, a blue-eyed maiden.  
Whom sixteen years had led  
Through a vale of thornless roses  
With summer skies o'erhead.

In the twilight I was standing  
Close by the cabin door,  
Watching the length'ning shadows,  
As I'd watched them oft before,

And list'ning with girlish pleasure  
To one who talked with me,  
A young man, tall and handsome,  
Whose wife I was soon to be.

And I loved him—for he was worthy  
Of the best love I could give—  
I love him yet, though he is dead,  
And I am left to live.

“Listen,” he said, “my darling,  
When you my own shall be,  
(More precious than gold or rubies)  
God’s Christmas gift to me.

“I'll no longer ask the mountains  
To yield to me their gold,  
For wealth more rare than any there,  
My 'raptured heart shall hold.

“Your love, my own my darling,  
Your love so pure and sweet,  
Ere to-morrow's glow fades from the snow,  
Will make my life complete.

“And yet I fear and tremble  
On the eve of our marriage-day,  
Lest the cup so dear, to my lips so near,  
Shall yet be dashed away.”

He kissed my lips, and I trembled,  
Though sharing not his fears,  
(That kiss, his last, has bound my soul  
To his, through all these years.)

“Look at the snow!” and he pointed  
To the mountains cold and white,  
“It seems ready to fall, my darling,  
There is danger, I fear, to-night.”

He took my hand as he said this,  
And led me within the door.  
I thought 'twere an idle fancy—  
It seemed to be nothing more.

But a sudden hush had fallen,  
And all was deathly still,  
Till a growing murmur seemed to break  
From the breast of the granite hill.

And then a mighty tremor  
Shook all the startled air—  
Then came the crashing of the walls —  
The sharp shrieks of despair.

Then darkness, utter darkness,  
But I was not alone,  
For out of the darkness reaching,  
A warm hand grasped my own;

And a voice that was hushed and muffled,  
And tremulous with pain,  
Said: "Courage, courage, darling;  
With life will hope remain."

Oh, those fearful hours of darkness!  
While I struggled for my breath,  
And the hand I clasped was chilling  
With the killing cold of death.

Oh, those awful hours of darkness,  
Crushed and smothered by the snow,  
With men working far above us,  
Seeking for the dead below.

I heard them, but I could not tell him,  
Could but firmer press his hand,  
To let him know that help was near us—  
Strive to make him understand—

And I could not touch the forehead  
With the chilling death-damp wet,  
Nor kiss the paling lips, so near,  
That my own so oft had met.

Ever fainter grew the whispers  
From the lips I loved to hear.  
Speaking with their dying efforts,  
Words of comfort and of cheer.

Strong hands toiled until they found us;  
And the light their lanterns shed,  
Showed us hand in hand unconscious—  
I, the living, he, the dead.

He is buried in the canon,  
Where the snow lies cold and white,  
All my heart is buried with him,  
So I told you no, to-night.



### A Christmas Prayer.

Almighty God, to thee we raise  
Our voices in a song of praise;  
For thou didst give, in thy great grace,  
Redemption to a fallen race;  
And on this day we ask again:  
Oh, make us worthy, Lord,  
Amen!



# The Old Man's Story.



### The Old Man's Story.

THE crescent moon had sunk to rest  
Behind the mountains of the West.  
The stars, with hesitating light,  
Flashed from the dark'ning vault of night.  
Each grim and hoary mountain peak  
Still rested on the twilight's cheek,  
As if the warmth that then it felt  
Might cause its stony heart to melt;  
And, penetrating ev'ry part,  
Could cause its frozen tears to start,  
And, softening features, now so stern,  
Make them with gentler luster burn.

And as the gaze half wond'ring swept  
To where the length'ning shadows crept  
It seemed as if such thoughts were true—  
The rugged crags less rugged grew.  
The dying twilight's trembling glow  
Brought blushes to the cheeks of snow,  
And mighty crags of cold gray stone  
Were warm and fair to look upon.  
Slow fades the landscape from the sight  
And all the world is lost in night,  
Save where the camp fire's flashes fall  
On the scattered trees that huge and tall  
Stand clear against the black night wall.  
Within the circle by the firelight made  
Some men in frontier garb arrayed  
Were resting, lying on the ground,  
Taking their ease the fire around.  
The smoke that upward there did float  
To vanish in the realms remote  
Slow rose, as if 'twere fain to rest

All listless on the prairie's breast.  
The trees that grew along the stream  
Scarce moved their leaves. Still as a dream  
The waters moved. The prairies wide  
That reached for miles on every side  
Were still, save the prowling coyote's howl  
And the mocking laugh of the prairie owl.  
Silence prevailed, till from his lips the smoke  
Blowing in rings, a young man spoke—  
“Why are we still? The night is long;  
Let's pass a part with tale or song.  
The eldest first shall speak, and then,  
If all agree, we younger men.”  
The speaker turned to one whose brow  
Time had in passing crowned with snow,  
A grave old man, upon whose face  
Had care and pain oft left a trace;  
A kindly man, whose accents told  
Of some refinement known of old,  
Who sat from all the rest apart

As if communing with his heart.

"Give us a tale," the young man said.

The old man raised his hoary head

(Those who were near heard that he sighed)

And thus to his comrades he replied—

"What shall I tell? In Fancy's flight

I have been in the past to-night.

You wonder that I'm all alone,

Why loved ones are to me unknown;

Why, old and way-worn, I must keep

My path alone down life's rough steep.

I sometimes wonder why from men

I'm singled out. What might have been

I know; but it is not for me

To think of that, or what might be.

What is, is best. Who sees us all

And heeds the sparrow should it fall

Makes no mistake. Though strange to me

His ways are best or would not be.

These thoughts bring peace; but in my breast

There still is striving, and unrest  
Within my soul. To still the strife  
I'll tell the story of my life.—

I love the plains. If by and by  
Within the prairie's breast I lie  
I'll be content; their silence deep  
Is fit for a weary soul's long sleep.  
And yet not always did I dwell  
Upon the plains I love so well;  
For where with loud and boist'rous roar  
The waves break on the rocky shore  
Of fair New England, far away,  
My infant eyes first saw the day—  
The waves that on the ledges beat  
Made music that hushed me to sleep.  
Still back to me my mem'ry brings  
Bright visions of the ships' white wings  
That, glancing o'er the glassy sea,  
Were watched in childhood's hours by me.  
The schoolhouse in a sheltered nook—

The dog-eared, blue-backed spelling book—  
The seats arranged along the wall—  
The spectacled master grim and tall—  
Are all remembered; not as though  
They all were gone long years ago;  
For often as I sleep I seem  
To live life over in a dream,  
And all things, as they used to be,  
The Dream King shows again to me.  
Thus many years had passed away,  
Like a long and dreamy day;  
And then was born within my breast  
A longing for the distant West.  
I'd heard the stories that were told  
Of crystal streams with sands of gold,  
And in the distance I could see  
Vast untold fortunes waiting me..  
I longed for that distant land to start,  
But could not bring myself to part  
With one—a girl, whose great dark eyes

Wore a look of pained surprise  
When I told my thoughts, to think that I  
Should wish from one so fond to part  
My fortunes in far lands to try  
Away from every loving heart.  
Fair Ruth,—my soul's eyes still can see  
My darling of the long ago;  
True was her heart as heart could be  
And it always beat alone for me  
From the earliest times I know.  
At school the self-same tasks were ours,  
And when the school-time's work was done  
Together we strayed through the woodland  
bowers  
Or gathered ferns and meadow flowers  
Down where the brook did run.  
Fair as a child, the passing years  
Made a more perfect beauty hers—  
Her great dark eyes, in childhood bright,  
Now glowed with a purer, holier light,

As if Angel guests her pure soul knew,  
Who in those dar's eyes looking through  
The silken luster, made divine

The face so perfect, pure and fair,  
Crowned by a radiant wreath of hair  
Wonderful tresses, dark and fine."

Here, as though some sudden thought  
The crowding recollections brought  
Which words would not - or could not - tell,  
The old man paused, and silence fell  
Upon the camp. His piercing gaze  
Upon the flickering firelight's blaze  
He fixed, as if he'd there beheld  
The faces he had known of old.  
After a time he gained control  
Of the forces struggling in his soul,  
And in his wild deep voice went on  
To tell the story he'd begun.

"Well, we were married, Ruth and I;  
We bade our Eastern home good bye

To build another home afar  
Beneath the rays of the evening star.  
For many weeks we journeyed on  
Our faces toward the setting sun  
That now no more in the sandy plain  
Each evening sank to crimson rest,  
But hid behind the mountain chain

That locked the portals of the West.  
We finished our journey quickly then  
And all our toil one march past  
The weary horses and weary men  
Found a welcome rest at last.

When thus to my promised land I'd come  
On Rocky Run I built a home —  
A noisy stream, that with boisterous flow  
Comes down from its source amid the snow —  
A pleasant stream, the trees that line  
Its banks are with the clematis vine  
In festoons decked; the graceful fern  
In the ledges' shade grows here and there

Where the shadows fall; else the sun would burn  
The delicate leaflets, frail and fair;  
And drooping willows stoop to kiss  
The stream so merrily flowing by  
That seems to laugh like a saucy miss  
Who leaves her lover alone to sigh.  
Just where the plains and mountains meet,  
Where first the prairies the waters greet,  
I built a cottage, rude to see,  
Yet almost a palace it seemed to me;  
Where Ruth was Queen and I was King  
And I feared not the troubles Time might bring,  
For with love and Ruth, and my own strong will  
I defied the world to do me ill.  
We dwelt in peace, my Ruth and I—  
With unnoted hours a year flew by.  
I was so happy I sometimes thought,  
Blinded by love, I quite forgot  
'Twas God who made me so, not Ruth—  
I loved her more than God—in truth

She was my all. I sadly bow  
To God and acknowledge my error now.  
Sometimes when man, his vision dim,

Worships some earthly thing too well,  
He angers God, who gives to him

Moments of Heaven, but hours of Hell,  
And takes the idol worshiped so,

Depriving the soul of its earthly light,  
And leaves it to grope in the dark below

Or slowly struggle to Heaven's height.  
And Ruth I loved with a greater love  
Than I gave to God on His throne above;  
And Mary, the baby—the name she bore

Was my mother's name, and it seemed to me  
That in her face I saw once more

The face that in boyhood I loved to see—  
But on these things I must not dwell  
But hasten with what I have to tell.  
One morning bright, when sky was fair,  
I kissed her good-bye and rode away.

I left her so lovely standing there  
In the glow of the morning the brightest ray;  
I meant but to go to the distant town —  
I said I'd return when three days were past.  
I looked back upon them as I rode down,  
Nor dreamed that look should be my last.  
How pretty Mary looked that day  
As she held out her tiny hands to me—  
Crowding and laughing so good and gay—  
None dreamed of danger soon to be.  
By easy stages journeying down,  
On the next day I reached the town;  
Along the solitary street,  
My business none, my restless feet  
Had carried me, for my heart did yearn  
For the coming day when I'd return.  
The sun, a disc of burnished gold,  
Had half his daily journey told;  
And, poised at his highest peak,  
Looked down through Indian-summer haze

To kiss the brown and withered cheek  
The prairies turned to meet his gaze.

The droning bee, with drowsy hum,  
Slow flitted through the heavy air;

Save that all Nature's voice was dumb,  
And sultry silence everywhere  
Rested oppressive on the ear.

The weary eye sought, all in vain,  
For rest upon the sandy plain  
That brown and parched did thirsting lie.  
Beneath a dun, unpitying sky.

Along the desolate village street  
No shade trees broke the rays of heat.

The cow-boys' ponies, safely tied  
To hitching-posts on either side,

Stood in the blaze of heat and light  
And waited, patient, for the night.

Their masters, lolling in the shade  
Of the bar-room porch, their thirst allayed  
With drinks that burned the parching throat

Instead of cooling. More remote,  
Beyond the limits of the street,  
The desert silence was complete—  
The type and epitome of death—

The yucca and the cactus there,  
Alone could live in that dry air  
Where bird or beast could scarce draw breath.  
But suddenly from out the haze,

Urging to its utmost speed  
A weary, lagging, foam-flecked steed,  
A way-worn rider met my gaze.

His broad sombrero, backward flung,  
Nodded in time to the hoofs that rung  
On the beaten trail. As on he came  
I saw that he clutched his horse's mane  
As though in weakness; bending low  
Above a blood-stained saddle-bow.

As he nearer came, with a sudden start,  
And a nameless fear that stilled my heart,  
I saw the rider was a friend

Of mine who dwelt at River Bend.  
I started forward, but my feet  
Refused their office. In my heart  
A thousand fears began to start  
And made it faster, louder, beat.  
I dimly saw the gath'ring men  
Help the tired rider to alight.  
He asked for water, drank—and then,  
Weakness conquered by will's might,  
He spoke. I bent my head and heard,  
Despair increasing at each word—  
‘The red-skins are at war again,  
Are stealing horses, killing men;  
Already down on Rocky Run  
They've burned the ranches—everyone—  
I come for help, for they intend  
A massacre up at River Bend.  
I left at dawn; they saw me, then'---  
I heard no more, the gath'ring men  
With frantic haste I thrust aside

And rushed to where my horse was tied.  
I threw the saddle to its place  
    And drew the cinch with frantic speed,  
The bridle seized, and to quick pace  
    Urged on my light and wiry steed.  
All this in a blind, unreasoning way,  
And blindly, too, I tried to pray  
    And tried to think, but all my thought  
Despair had into chaos wrought.  
My thoughts impetuous rushed along  
Like drift on a flood swelled current strong  
That, all unguided, rushes fast  
    Only to find no goal at last.  
The road flew fast beneath the feet  
Of my tireless mustang, strong and fleet;  
Mile after mile, with sage and sand  
    Ahead, behind, and on either hand.—  
Mile after mile, and yet it seemed  
As if I traveled not, but dreamed—  
As if some phantom of the night

Had bound me, and the morning light  
Must set me free from that horror deep,  
That awful fantasy of sleep.

I raved, I vowed it should not be—  
He lied who brought such news to me—  
My home upon the Rocky Run,  
The fairest home beneath the sun,  
Had not been burned—'twas not the truth,  
The red-skins had not slain my Ruth.—  
But no, he said all had been burned,

All the ranches on Rocky Run;  
And now the veiled and sullen sun  
Looked on my home to ashes turned.—  
Thus reason whispered, and I wept.

Oh, blessed tears, they brought relief  
To my soul upon its rack of grief,  
And a calm across my spirit crept.  
Long years have passed since then, and yet  
Not once since then have my eyes been wet.  
The sun went down as on I sped,

The harvest moon rose round and red;  
And then I saw a crimson light  
Flash through the darkness of the night.  
I saw the furious flames ascend  
From the burning homes at River Bend,  
And faintly heard the distant shout  
Of savages dancing the fire about.  
I did not pause, but kept my course  
And only faster urged my horse,  
For many miles must yet be passed,  
And day was coming—coming fast.  
Of danger not a thought had I—  
If they were dead I, too, would die.  
So on through the darkness fast I sped,  
With foes behind and foes ahead.  
Oft in man's life a time is known  
When reason, losing her control,  
Over the ever struggling soul,  
Falters and trembles on her throne;  
When rising clouds of grief uproll,

When death bells in the sad heart toll,  
And all his being seems to groan  
In answer to their sullen tone.  
In such a moment comes despair  
    And lends to men cold nerves of steel;  
Reason resumes her sceptre there,  
    And man, in his being, seems to feel  
The strength of God to do or dare  
    Without man's help, or help of prayer.  
'Twas thus with me—all hope was dead—  
To learn the worst I onward fled  
Hoping, fearing, caring nought,  
My mind intent on a single thought—  
To reach my goal. My mustang's strength,  
Though great, began to fail at length;  
I felt the quiver of tired limb,  
And in my heart I pitied him;  
But still, with spur and raw-hide blow,  
I urged him to still faster go.  
He kept up bravely—but in vain,

Exhaustion conquered, and he fell  
Headlong upon the sandy plain  
In sight of the hills where my Ruth did dwell;  
He struggled faintly then to rise—  
I looked into his glazing eyes  
And knew that Death claimed a friend  
Who had proved faithful to the end.  
I loosed the cinch to give him breath,  
For him the last act I could do;  
Another master now he knew,  
A mightier master, who was Death.  
I paused to rest a moment, then  
I quickly hurried on again;  
The rising sun had touched with red  
The crags toward which my pathway led.  
I heard the stream, whose waters fell  
So musically adown the dell.  
Save but for that a silence deep  
Seemed over all the world to creep;  
Awful silence, stern and dread,

Like that in cities of the dead.  
Just as the sun's first golden beam  
Fell all aflame on the silver stream  
I reached my home that once had been;  
Now savage hate and fiendish sin  
Had, all unpitying, lit the fire  
That made my home the funeral pyre  
Of all my hopes. The ruin there  
Proved that my God had scorned my prayer;  
The lights of Faith and Hope went out

As though they ne'er should burn again,  
And ruined altars lay about

My soul that groped in darkness then;  
But, rallying all my strength, I cried  
Ruth's name aloud, but all in vain;—  
Only the echoing hills replied,  
Answering back from the canon's side,

As if the rocks could feel my pain.  
I raved when silence confirmed my fear—  
Still softly the granite crags replied,

And the whispering trees by the water's side  
Murmured a comfort I could not hear.

Now, that at length I knew the worst,

My strength fast failed; so weak was I  
As I turned to quench my burning thirst

At the stream so noisily flowing by  
I staggered and stumbled, and nearly fell;

Then saw—I shudder e'en now to tell

Of the sight that met my startled eyes  
And held them fast in dread surprise.

In the trembling shade of the aspen trees  
That shivered and quivered, though no breeze  
Was stirring that could move a leaf,

(They trembled, like my soul, with grief).

My Ruth was lying. She had fled

From the burning home, and fallen dead

'Mid the flowers and ferns of the hidden dell

That, in happier hours, she loved so well.

Her motionless and wounded breast

Close to the blood stained moss was pressed,

And the ferns that grew by the water's side  
With a strange and a crimson stain were dyed.  
No words of mine can half express  
The wond'rous beauty of raven tress,  
Wind-wreathed above a bloodless brow  
Whiter than purest marble now.  
Her face was turned so I could see  
Her eyes that always smiled to me;  
Now how they stared—they seemed to wear  
A mute, appealing look of prayer.  
How still she lay, with lips close drawn—  
    Strange ashy lips—where kiss of Death  
        Had stolen color and stolen breath;  
And eyes that gazed on the great unknown  
Made her to seem more strangely fair  
Than living mortals ever are.  
How long I gazed, as in a spell,  
Upon her there I cannot tell.  
At last I knelt, and in my own  
I took her hand. How like a stone,

Heavy and cold, it seemed to be,  
Nor warmed when clasped or kissed by me.  
The hand that my own rugged grasp  
Had answered with such tender clasp,  
Or loving rested on my brow,  
Was cold and unresponsive now.  
How long I knelt I ne'er have known—

A searching party found me there;  
Reason had left me, and despair  
And frenzy marked me for their own.  
For months the fever in my brain  
Burned fiercely; but at length  
Reason resumed her throne again  
And Spring, returning, brought me strength.  
But when I walked abroad again  
My hair was white as locks of snow,  
My beard as white as it is now;  
Though young, I seemed an old, old man.  
Long weary years have passed since then  
And I've sought for Mary all in vain.

. But hope is hope; it cannot die—  
And so, led on by phantoms fair  
That from my sight forever fly  
And vanish in the viewless air,  
I wander on, but never far  
From where my best loved memories are.  
Waiting until I'm called to go  
Beyond the sunset's golden glow—  
To the shores beyond life's troubled sea  
Where Ruth and Mary wait for me."

The old man paused; the fire was low  
And flickered with a feeble glow  
As the night wind kissed it, cold and damp,  
And silence and darkness ruled the camp.







# Miscellaneous Poems.



## Compensation.

(IN THE PRESENCE OF DEATH.)

He's departed—broken hearted,  
We are left a moment only;  
Not forever would God sever  
Souls that love and leave us lonely.

Nature ever is repeating: "For each parting there's  
a meeting."

In the harmony of nature every loss must have its  
gain—

Not a chord but whose vibration find its certain  
compensation;

Every link is but a portion of a universal chain.

We can borrow for our sorrow  
Solace, sweet, from Nature's story;  
Now 'tis sadness—now 'tis gladness,  
Darkness but gives birth to glory.  
Tho' the tenderest ties are broken, tho' the last fare-  
wells are spoken,  
And the fond kiss falls unheeded on the cold and  
pallid brow—  
Nature whispers: "Be thou certain that beyond the  
mystic curtain  
Still the chain remains unbroken, tho' thou cans-  
not see it now."

God, who loved him, hath removed him  
From the sombre world of sorrow.  
Hearts are smarting with the parting  
That shall glow with joy to-morrow.  
Loving faith still bids defiance to the colder creed o  
science,

Reason bows her head to listen when Hope whispers soft and low;  
And we know beyond the portal all will wake to life immortal—  
We have parted in the twilight to meet in the morning's glow.

In God's keeping he is sleeping—  
Sweetly sleeping—he was weary.  
Though but sleeping, we are weeping,  
And the world seems dark and dreary;  
But we know the Savior's story, who was dead and  
rose in glory.  
And we bow our heads in meekness to the Father,  
kind and just,  
And await the glorious dawning of the resurrection  
morning,  
When we'll meet beyond the darkness with the  
dear ones loved and lost.

### The Coal Miners.

Deep down in the heart of the earth  
Afar from the light of the sun,  
That the glow may not fade on the hearth,  
Their wearisome labor is done.

Far down in the darkness and damp  
They toil in the smoke-laden air;  
The fitful glow of the lamp  
But heightens the darkness that's there.

The world is too thoughtless to care  
How they labor by night and by day.  
How, down in the darkness, they wear  
The years of their manhood away.

So toil they from youth until age—  
Companions to Danger and Death—  
Toil on for a pitiful wage,  
As long as God giveth them breath.

Then they die!—and forgotten they rest.  
For them the world spares not a sigh—  
The heavy clods fall on the breast,  
And the great world, unheeding, goes by.



### The Cliff Dwellers.

Mute monuments of a dead and buried race—  
Strange relics of a long forgotten age—  
Unlettered margins torn from history's page,  
Why stand ye here? Who put ye in this place?  
What actors moved upon this ancient stage?  
Say, silent crags, along the canon's side,  
Is there no name that never yet has died?  
Poet, philosopher, saint, or holy sage!—  
Have they all perished, and left not a trace  
That with these stones forever shall abide?  
No; none! Time's river did erase  
All marks of this forgotten nation's pride;  
Barbaric splendor and their sylvan grace  
Alike were whelmed beneath the restless tide.

Of deeds of valor, by their heroes done,  
No poet sang and, dying, left his song  
To be repeated by an endless throng.  
No sage who bowed to greet the rising sun  
And in rude wisdom walked his way along  
Has carved in stone his feeble, fleeting thought,  
To tell the creed he lived, believed and taught.  
And now an alien people, who are strong  
In war and wisdom, and have truly won  
A foremost place by the great deeds they've wrought,  
Walk 'mid the ruins, and wonder if some wrong  
Angered high Heaven, and with ruin fraught  
Its wrath descended—and if 'neath the thong  
Of sin we, too, shall come to naught.

### The Pine Trees.

Tell me, what are the pine trees saying  
As the wind, their branches swaying,  
    Gives them voice ?

Why do they moan and sigh forever—  
Weeping and wailing, as though they never  
    Could rejoice ?

Is it for the dead they're weeping ?  
For the mortals that are sleeping  
    'Neath the mould ?

Man's life gleams a moment dimly—  
They stand for ages, towering grimly—  
    Giants old.

No! 'tis not for that they're weeping---  
Not that mortal men are sleeping  
Everywhere.

So the golden sunbeams kiss them,  
So the mountain winds caress them—  
Naught they care.

Why they thus are always weeping,  
What sad secrets they are keeping,  
They've not said.

I only know they're always sighing,  
Still will mourn when I am dying  
And will grieve when I am dead.



**A Valentine.**

Lady! I saw not many days ago  
From Heaven slow drifting down a flake of snow  
Pure as thyself. It drifted past thy face  
And rested on a tiny fringe of lace  
That clasped thy throat; and as I watched it there  
It slowly melted, and was lost in air.

Delicious death! Oh, could it be that I  
Might such a death in such a manner die!  
And resting there, upon thy balmy breast,  
Slow sink away into eternal rest.

## Suffering on the Prairies.

Written at a time when the people of the "Rain Belt" were in want  
on account of drought.

There is suffering on the prairies  
Where the snow lies cold and white;  
There are many cheerless firesides  
That are cold and dark to-night,

There are babes that moan with hunger  
Upon the mother's breast;  
And on faces, worn and pallid,  
Is the mark of famine pressed.

They have toiled, those hardy settlers,  
They have struggled—but in vain!  
The pitiless sun above them  
Scorched their fields upon the plain.

All is lost. Their toil and hardships,  
That so manfully they bear,  
Are in vain. Has God forsaken?  
Will He fail to hear their prayer?

Must their children die of hunger  
When there's plenty in the land?  
Are there none who wish to aid them?  
None to lend a helping hand?

Hark! From West and North the tidings—  
“We are ready, do not fear!  
God has heard, and we, His servants,  
Send an answer to your prayer.

From our stores of gold and silver,  
From our bursting bins of grain,  
Swift as steam can bear them onward  
To the dwellers of the plain,

Will we send them all that's needful—  
Food for starving babe and wife;  
Gold and silver freely give them—  
What are these, compared with life ?

Give them freely—they are needy!  
Give from out our plenteous store!  
And on God's great book recorded  
Shall the gift stand evermore.

'They were naked and ye clothed them;  
Hungered, and ye gave them food.'  
In the name of God we do it"—  
And God answers, "It is good."

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### **Broken.**

Once a king, o'er whose dominions  
Gracious Wisdom spread her pinions,  
Built a strange and wondrous time-piece, in each  
part most complete.

'Neath a dome of wondrous beauty  
The magic wheels did well their duty,  
While beneath a perfect pendulum in perfect meas-  
ure beat.

Rightly was each part adjusted,  
But a strange spell on it rested,  
And one word by fair lips spoken could its mechanism  
jar.

Only one a word could utter  
That could cause the slightest flutter  
Of the pendulum so perfect, and its faithful record  
mar.

But that single word was spoken  
And the pendulum was broken—  
Nevermore in perfect time would it swing.  
But with tremulous vibrations  
And with varying oscillations  
Did it mark uncertain time for the king.

Till at last it stopped forever,  
As though wearied by endeavor  
That was useless; for it seemed as if it ever throbbed  
in vain.  
But the maker—full of pity—  
May, in some far distant city,  
Cause the wondrous works to vibrate in harmony  
again.



To \_\_\_\_\_

All know thou art lovely, I know thou art proud,  
Yet with all of thy beauty soon--soon will the shroud  
    Envelope thy beauty and pride. On thy cheek  
    The groveling earth-worm shall sustenance seek.

Thou dost scorn every lover! When Death comes to  
    woo,

Thy scorn cannot save thee—with him must thou go.  
    He'll be a brave lover! With his skeleton arm  
    He closely will clasp thee, and shield thee from  
    harm.

Thou'l be robed for thy bridal in garments of white;  
On thy pale brow shall rest thy tresses of light!

    All pulseless and cold on thy motionless breast  
    At the touch of thy bride-groom, thy fair hands  
    shall rest.

Thy lips are of cherry! When they meet 'those of  
Death

In a kiss, they will pale; they will close, and  
between them thy breath

No longer shall flow. Thy bright, laughing eye  
Shall be dimmed—thou shalt die.

Then silently, slow, shalt thou go to thy home,  
Thy dwelling eternal—that men call the tomb.

Thou shalt be forgotten! Thy headstone shall  
praise

Thy beauty, thy virtues, but for a few days.

As uninterrupted the ages shall flow  
E'en that column of marble in dust shall lie low.

No mark, no inscription---unthought of, un-  
known,

Thou shalt rest till a cycle of cycles has flown---  
Till the stars are extinguished and darkened the sun,  
Till time and eternity merge into one.

**Upward.**

The nearer we walk to Heaven the rougher is the  
way,  
A rugged pathway must we tread, who reach the  
heights to-day;  
But with all earth beneath us—above us none but  
God—  
We'll not regret the rocky way our weary feet have  
trod.

So onward then and upward let's toil with all our  
might  
And triumphant on the summit we'll make our camp  
to-night;  
And resting there at evening, our weary striving  
done,  
Enjoy the proud position by our endeavor won.

### **Grand Lake.**

In the vague and vacant vastness  
Of a frowning forest fastness  
Lies a dreamy lake, whose waters whisper evermore;  
And the melancholy sighing  
Of the pine trees seems replying  
Voices of the elfin dwellers in the forest on the shore.

And at night the moon doth lend her  
Soft rays to enhance the splendor,  
And the waters change to silver 'neath the magic of  
her beams.  
And the lake, the light reflecting,  
O'er the granite crags projecting,  
Changeth them to fairy castles, builded by the King  
of Dreams.

And the softened, gloomy grandeur  
Fills with awe the wand'ring stranger  
Who beholds the cliffs' bold outlines softened in the  
silver light.

And the liquid light down-flowing,  
All concealing, yet half showing  
Spirit caves and fairy grottoes, mystic regions brings  
to sight.

Where the waves, the forest meeting,  
Whisper to the trees a greeting  
Once I lingered, while the waters kissed the pebbles  
at my feet.

On a mossy bank I rested  
And strange thoughts the waves suggested  
As they whispered to each other in low voices, soft  
and sweet.

As, half dreaming, I was lying,  
Sensations strange and stupefying

Stopped my ears and dulled my senses and uncertain  
made my sight.

Then a sudden light broke o'er me—  
And from out the lake before me  
Rose a rare and beauteous being, radiant as the  
morning light.

Who, across the lake advancing,  
Attendant sprites about her dancing,  
Caused my heart to feel the presence of the Spirit of  
the Lake.

Strange thoughts in my brain were seething,  
Yet I lay there, scarcely breathing,  
Lest the magic spell should break.

But the spirit paused beside me  
Saying, "No ill shall betide thee,  
Happiest, thou, of all the living, that thou canst  
behold me here.  
Listen to me well, O mortal!"

Only once I pass yon portal  
In a thousand years, and never yet did I to man  
appear.

“Thou shalt learn from this chance meeting  
What the waves have been repeating—  
Thou shalt learn the wondrous secrets of the depths  
that lie below.

My power shall turn back the pages  
Of the long forgotten ages—  
Thou shalt see what time has witnessed in the van-  
ished long ago.

“The lake to-night shall be a mirror—  
Deeper, fairer, purer, clearer—  
Than the earth in all the ages that are past did ever know;  
Time to-night, for you, is banished.”  
Saying this, she quickly vanished;  
And I gazed into the mystic mirror that inviting  
spread below.

Then I saw the grand upheaval  
Of the mighty crags primeval,

And a long forgotten ocean rolled its surges at their  
feet;

With no eye to see the wonders  
And no ear to hear the thunders  
As they on the ledges beat.

In majestic isolation,  
'Mid chaotic desolation,

Rose the peaks that were forerunners of a continent to be.

While with hideous sounds, infernal,  
Roared and raged the fires internal,

Ever breaking forth in tumult in their struggles to  
be free.

Quickly vanished then the vision  
To give place to scenes Elysian—

Hillsides clothed with magic splendor where the  
ferns and palm trees grew.

But the skies above were clouded,  
And in semi-darkness shrouded  
Grew the strange and beauteous forest, though no  
sun it ever knew.

Then again the scene was shifted,  
And the night of time was lifted  
From a world of desolation, from a world of ice and  
snow.

A glacier through the gorge descended,  
Whose walls of crystal clearness blended  
With the waters far below.

Beneath it rocks were soft and pliant.—  
Like the chisel of a giant  
By a master workman wielded, slow it carved its  
mighty bed.

Then, as though the sunlight fearing,  
Slow before it disappearing  
Left the lake then in its stead.

## New Year.

Souls that were spotless then are dyed with crimson  
now,

And ruined hopes, and broken hearts that bleed,  
And sorrowing, sin-burdened souls are all about —  
Yet some that sorrowed then are joyful now.

Time dries all tears; at least some hopes have bloomed  
And borne full fruit, even if some are dead.

The weary ones death touched are resting now.

Bid the old year God speel—all hail the new!  
No matter what it brings of hopes and fears—  
Hopes born to die, or fears that are too true.

God wills it all, and what God wills is best —

And if, when this new year shall come to die

I can look back and say, “I have caused no tears to  
flow,

No deeds of mine have wounded sensitive hearts;

I have been true to God, to man, myself”—

All will be well. My duty done, 'tis safe  
To leave all else to God.

### Truth.—A Vision.

I had a dream, if one could call it such—  
I saw a picture, painted by an angel's touch  
In colors most sublime; and all the night  
Glowed with a pure and a most holy light;  
And in the foreground of the picture stood  
A being of the angelic sisterhood.  
And while I wondered if I waked or slept  
Behold, the being from the picture stepped  
And, with soft voice, the solemn silence broke  
And thus to me in silv'ry accents spoke—

“Long hast thou sought me, burning midnight oil  
And cheating sleep in ever useless toil—  
My name is Truth — look on my face,” said she,  
“And tell me, mortal, what it is you see.”  
I raised mine eyes, that wonder had down-east,  
To gaze upon the face of Truth at last.  
But, lo! A mist concealed her face from me;  
I strained mine eyes in vain—Alas, I could not see.  
“Thou canst not see!” she cried in mocking voice,  
“That thou canst not, is reason to rejoice—  
No man who draws life’s feeble, fleeting breath  
Can gaze upon my face and taste not Death;  
Beyond Death’s vale”—but then the spell I broke  
And, trembling with amaze, I from the dream awoke



### **Lost.**

Like the sunlight on a bower,  
    Like the moonlight on the sea,  
Like the starlight on a flower,  
    Thou hast gone away from me.

From the chambers of my heart,  
    Where thou didst reign, a queen,  
Spirit like didst thou depart—  
    Like an angel in a dream.

Oh, the sunlight on the bower,  
    And the moonlight on the sea,  
And the starlight on the flower,  
    May all come back to me.

But thou wilt come—no, never!  
    Thou art gone for evermore.  
And the fairest dream that ever  
    Mortal dreamt, for me is o'er.

**Remember the Moonlight.**

When moonbeams are sparkling  
O'er all the world darkling,  
Oh, who would not linger beneath the soft light,  
When to dark earth is given  
A glory from Heaven  
In the silence and hush of the beautiful night.

Oh, then in the gleaming  
Of moonlight, down-streaming,  
I would happily linger, if thou wert with me.  
When moonbeams are cheery,  
Oh, who could grow weary  
Of walking alone with the moonlight and thee.

We part, to my sorrow,  
And I on the morrow  
Must mingle again with toil-driven men.  
In the tumult and striving,  
'Mid cares that are driving,  
Oh, who would not sigh for the moonlight again!

### **Light and Love.**

Light is the life of the earth,  
Light illumines the heavens above—  
But the light of the human heart  
Is the glorious light of love.  
In Heaven love reigns supreme,  
And e'en in the depths of hell  
It softens the wretch's pain  
To know that his loved ones dwell  
Where that thrice holy beam  
Around them sheds its light,  
Whose absence makes for him  
The bleak, eternal night.

### Farewell.

Farewell! Farewell! You leave us to-day,  
The home of thy childhood forsaking;  
And yet, as you leave us to go far away,  
Forget not the hearts that are breaking.

The pain of the parting is keenest to thee,  
Who home, friends and kindred art leaving;  
But thy grief 'mid new scenes soon forgotten will be,  
While thy friends by the Grand are still grieving.

When 'mid scenes of enjoyment, where gay voices are,  
In merriment, raised all about thee,  
Forget not the friends, who from thee afar,  
Are waiting all lonely without thee.

Farewell and Godspeed! And wherever kind fate  
Shall lead thee, we pray thou wilt never  
Forget thy kind friends, who thy coming await  
At thy home on the banks of Grand River.

### To A Mountain Peak.

Hail to thee! Hail to thee!  
Monarch of mountain peaks,  
With time-furrowed forehead and tresses of snow;  
Like a sentinel standing  
Now and forever,  
Guarding the beautiful valleys below.

Almost immutable,  
Age cannot harm thee—  
As thou'rt standing thou'l stand until Time's course  
is run.  
And then, all unconquered,  
At last thou shalt perish  
Only when fadeth the stars and the sun.

### **Memorial Day.**

Here, by the mound where the warrior reposes,  
His battles all fought, his long marches done,  
His resting place bright with the garlands of roses  
Entwined with the laurels his valor has won,  
Let us kneel and give thanks for the good he has  
done for us;

Praise God for the freedom that now is our own,  
And vow to defend all the rights he has won for us,  
Nor let Liberty's temple be rudely o'erthrown.

From four million bondsmen the shackles were shattered,

And the starry flag waves o'er a land that is free,  
The hosts that opposed it our warriors have scattered,  
And Liberty's banner for aye shall it be.

In Liberty's name our blood shall defend it—

Nor tyrants find shelter beneath its bright fold.  
Death to the traitor who dares try to rend it,  
Or to him who would sell it to tyrants for gold.

**Death.**

Death, Death, Death!

Why comest thou not to me?  
I have felt thine icy breath,  
And again I challenge thee.

Come, Death! I have no fear—  
Come quickly, while I wait;  
Thou hast taken those most dear,  
Why callest thou me so late?

No charms for me has life—  
No joys to me can come;  
I am weary of the strife  
And long for my summons home.

Too late, too late, too late!  
I sink 'neath the cruel blows  
Struck by the hand of Fate—  
For Fate and I are foes.

No more, no more, no more,  
Shall I from her bonds be free;  
Till at last, when all is o'er,  
Kind Death shall rescue me.



### A Tramp's Story.

Thanks, lady; I've been on the road since morning—

I'm but a tramp that walks the railroad track,  
Fit subject for your pity or your scorning;

Yet, once—but why call days forgotten back.

May I rest here and eat the food you've given ?

A trifling favor, yet 'tis much, you know,  
To one who knows not rest, and hopes for none in  
heaven;

And yet—and yet, it was not always so.

I was a miner once, hard working, straight and sober,

And never thought a tramp's lot would be mine,  
Until one day---I think 'twas in October,

'Way back in the fall of fifty nine—

A family pitched their tent close by Jack Arthur's  
shanty--

A shiftless chap the old man seemed to be—  
They seemed hard up, their grub was mighty scanty,  
One could have eaten what sufficed for three.

He had a wife, a pale faced comely woman,  
Married beneath her, I have heard it said;  
But now, with zeal that seemed most super-human,  
She toiled among the miners for their daily bread.

She made some shirts for Jack, and so he got  
acquainted  
With little Ruth, one of our mountain girls;  
A fairer being artist never painted.  
From dainty foot to crown of wind-blown curls.

Just seventeen, but time had harshly treated  
The face that older seemed by many years;  
For by her fireside care and want were seated  
And on her face were traces left by tears.

Jack loved her well, with all that fond devotion  
Impetuous youth showers on its first-found love—  
Passion, resistless as the waves of ocean,  
Affection, changeless as the stars above.

And she loved Jack, yet she was but a woman  
And, being such, was fickle, though so fair;  
But Jack, who believed her something more than  
human,  
Looked in her eyes and saw but love-light there.

But she was faithless—so one night they parted;  
Just as the golden twilight darkened into gray  
Jack left her—haughty still, though broken hearted,  
From her and happiness he turned away.

You smile, and doubt the story I've been telling—  
I'm but a tramp beside the railroad track,  
A worthless vagabond whom drink is swiftly killing;  
That all is true, yet I—well, I am Jack.



### **Colorado.**

Come, fill the glasses to the brim  
And touch them clinking rim to rim,  
And drink a toast in sparkling wine  
To our uncrowned queen by right divine.

Colorado, regal queen—

To thee thy bards their tribute bring;  
Yet powerless fails the voice or pen  
That of thy glories strives to sing.  
Thy loyal subjects, bowing down  
Before thy silver throne to-day,  
Would crown thee with a golden crown  
And hail thee as their queen for aye.  
Land of majestic mountain peaks,  
Of gloomy canons and of crystal creeks;  
Of solitudes—silent, vague and vast,  
And scenic grandeur unsurpassed;

Of parks and lakes, whose waters clear  
Are undisturbed, save the timid deer  
That pause for a moment on the brink  
And of the cooling waters drink.

Thy purple peaks that tower on high—  
Vast columns that support the sky—  
Are books, upon whose leaves of stone

Enwritten by a mighty hand,  
Are the grandest thoughts to man made known  
In language all may understand.

Here man is man, and pampered power  
Is scorned, as it deserves to be;  
Unaided manhood rules the hour,  
For in thy borders all are free.

Thy boundless plains that spread about  
Make one's manhood widen out—  
The untrammeled soul grows on until  
The universe it seems to fill,  
And in the distant depths of space  
Meets the Creator face to face.

### Above the World.

I have climbed to the top of the mountain  
And, standing all alone,  
Dispute with the gray old eagle  
His right to his rocky throne.  
So he flies in circles above me,  
He can still be higher than I;  
While I still toil to the mountain top  
He proudly soars to the sky.

Alone on the top of the mountain  
With all the world below--  
Alone 'mid the stern old granite crags  
And the cold white drifts of snow;  
And even the eagle is resting  
On a cliff that is far below,  
And now I am truly the monarch  
Of the crags and drifts of snow.

L.of C.

A monarch, though but for a moment--  
A king, for a pittance of time--  
Yet never monarch before me  
Had a kingdom so grand as mine.  
Alexander wept when he'd conquered  
A miserable part of mankind;  
I exult--not because I have slain men,  
But because I have left them behind.



## **D**ay.

### I. MORNING.

Wild birds waking  
And upward taking  
Into the azure sky their flight.  
Dew-drops sparkling,  
Shadows darkling  
In the last foot-prints of Night.

### II. NOON.

Hot walls glaring,  
Windows staring  
Blankly at the sun-burned street.  
Violets drooping,  
Daisies stooping  
'Neath their burden of the heat.

## III. EVENING.

Homeward going,  
Cattle lowing  
In the roadways and the lanes.  
Leng'thning shadows  
On the meadows—  
Mountain shadows on the plains

## IV. NIGHT.

Day grows dimmer,  
Faint stars glimmer—  
The twilight follows the sun;  
And slowly certain  
Falls Night's curtain—  
And the day at last is done.

### Beyond the Clouds.

Over the range is a country strange  
'Neath summer skies that know no change.—

Fair forests grow, bright streamlets flow  
Through the beautiful vales that lie below.

The country is zoned by mountains high—  
Bleak clouds 'round their snow-clad summits lie;  
Gloomy their canons, by cold winds kissed—  
Dark their crags, 'mid enshrouding mist.

And all alone must the traveler go  
Who would reach the beauteous vales,<sup>below</sup>  
Helpless we stand as they pass away,  
One by one, through the shadows gray.

The cold wind comes from the snowy peaks  
And kisses the color from lips and cheeks.

We bid them farewell and they pass from sight  
'Mid the chilling mists of the mountains' height.

But, unseen to us, there's One to guide  
Through the dreary pass to the other side.—

No matter how dark the journey seems  
It leads to the Parks of the Living Streams.

And over the range, in that country strange,  
'Neath summer skies that know no change,

Our loved ones wait; and soon or late  
We'll meet beyond the mountains' gate.



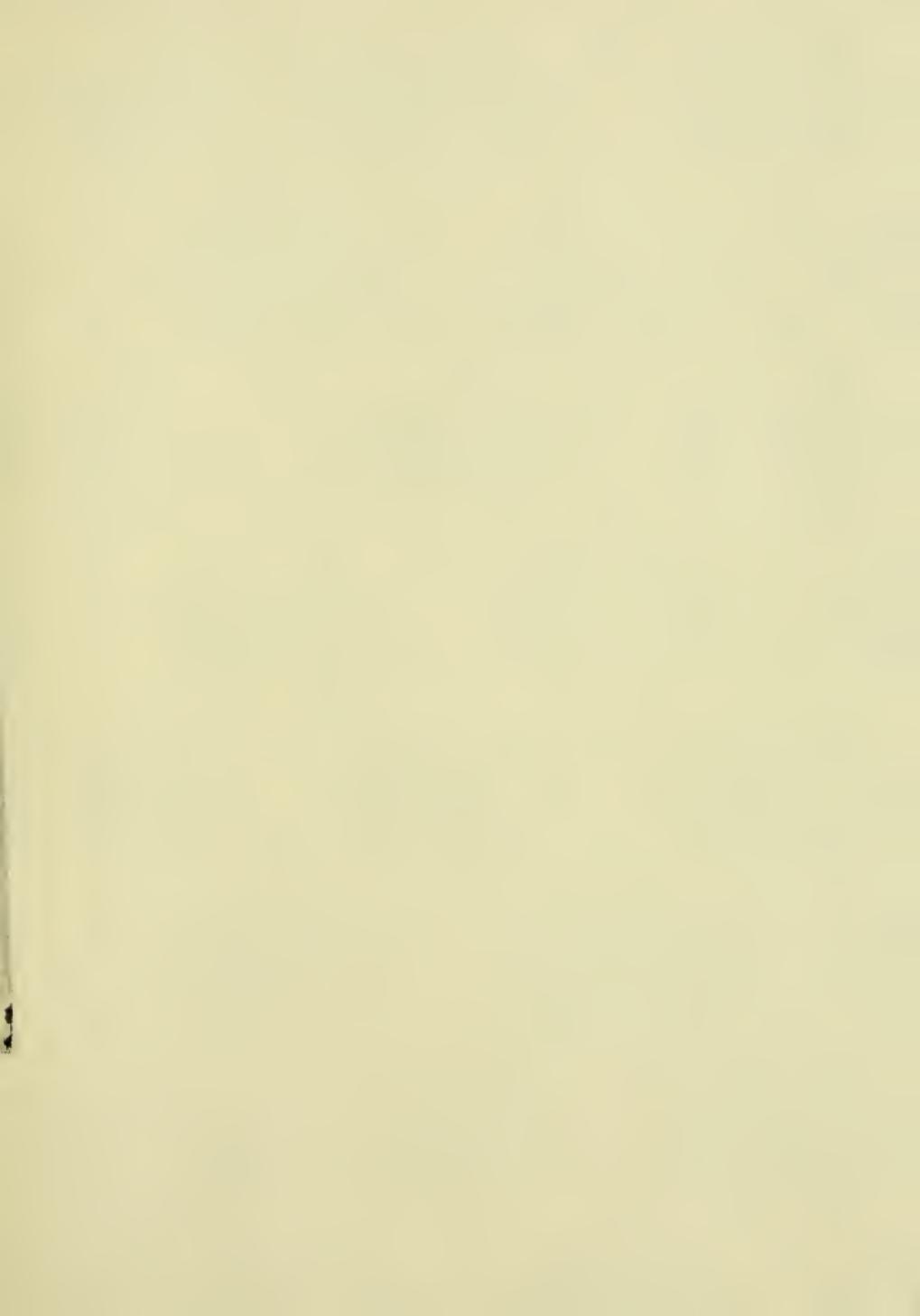
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